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Now Donald Trump wants President Obama to release his college transcripts.

President Obama went to Occidental College for two years before transferring to Columbia College. Then, after a stint as a community organizer, he went to Harvard Law School.

"I heard he was a terrible student, terrible," Trump said. "How does a bad student go to Columbia and then to Harvard? I'm thinking about it, I'm certainly looking into it. Let him show his records."

"I have friends who have smart sons with great marks, great boards, great everything and they can't get into Harvard."

A generation ago, Columbia Law School could have filled every spot with the children of people who moved in the same circles as the likes of Donald Trump. Instead, one spot went to the child of a widowed bookkeeper from a smallish town in the South.

I went to public schools and to my state university. I did okay all along, but I was really a late bloomer academically. I was probably thrown off stride more than I understand even now by my father's death in my early adolescence, and I was doing better than was really expected of me anyway.

I decided to pull my grades up some in my junior year so I could get into law school. I started going to class and reading the assigned materials. I was surprised by the difference it made. Then I did surprisingly well on the LSAT.

So I applied to some "national" law schools just to see what happened.

I don't think Columbia Law School had a cracker quota, exactly, but I wasn't like most of their applicants. I was pretty much like everybody else in North Carolina, but at Columbia I added diversity. And taking some kids from outside the usual pool created a little social mobility, if you like that kind of thing.

I'd probably never really break into the ranks of the nation's power elite, but I might be in Congress or something. I might not be a bad alum to have.

They didn't call it "affirmative action," but it was the same idea.

Since I didn't experiment with studying for the first couple of years of college, I'm sure there was some kid with a higher GPA who could have gotten the spot that went to me. But that kid probably had some advantages that weren't available to me, just as Trump had some early advantages, so I can only feel so bad about it.

Of course, it wasn't really all that long ago that the Ivies didn't even pretend to be meritocratic. Scrappy middle-class kids with good grades and board scores routinely lost out to academically undistinguished kids from prominent families. But I don't want every seat at the Ivies to go to the children of Donald Trump's friends, even if their grades and board scores are a little better. I want some to go to kids like Barack Obama, and like me.

So if Columbia College and Harvard Law School considered factors other than grades and board scores when they offered a spot to President Obama, then good for them.

Does Donald Trump ever pass on an opportunity to offend?

